

Listing of Claims:

1. (Original) A method of manufacturing an introducer sheath, comprising:
positioning a first polymeric sleeve over a mandrel, the first polymeric sleeve comprising a first striped extrusion arranged in a generally helical pattern along the first sleeve;

positioning a second polymeric sleeve over the first sleeve, the second polymeric sleeve comprising a second striped extrusion arranged in a generally helical pattern along the second sleeve, the first and second polymeric sleeves being axially aligned such that said second striped extrusion is superposed over said first striped extrusion to define a generally braid-like configuration; and

heating the first and second polymeric sleeves.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said first striped extrusion comprises a plurality of extruded first stripes formed in said first polymeric sleeve, each said first stripe spaced from an adjoining stripe and arranged in said generally helical pattern, and said second striped extrusion comprises a plurality of extruded second stripes formed in said second polymeric sleeve, each said second stripe spaced from an adjoining stripe and arranged in said generally helical pattern.

3. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein at least one of said first and second striped extrusions is provided along an outer surface of the respective first and second polymeric sleeves.

4. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein at least one of said first and second striped extrusions is provided along an inner surface of the respective first and second polymeric sleeves.

5. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the first striped extrusion is provided along an outer surface of the circumference of the first polymeric sleeve, and the second striped extrusion is provided along an inner surface of the second polymeric sleeve.

6. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the first polymeric sleeve is co-extruded with the first striped extrusion, and the second polymeric sleeve is co-extruded with the second striped extrusion.

7. (Original) The method of claim 1, comprising positioning an inner liner over the mandrel intermediate the mandrel and the first polymeric sleeve.

8. (Original) The method of claim 7, comprising:
positioning a coil over the inner liner, the coil having a plurality of coil turns;
and
bonding the first polymeric sleeve to the inner liner between the coil turns by the heating.

9. (Original) The method of claim 8, comprising:
positioning a heat shrink tube over the assembly comprising the mandrel, inner liner, coil, and first and second sleeves;
carrying out the heating step in the heat shrink tube in a manner such that the first and second striped extrusions maintain the braided configuration; and
removing the sheath from the mandrel and the heat shrink tube.

10. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein at least one of said polymeric sleeves comprises at least two sleeve segments.

11-20. (Canceled)

21. (New) A method of manufacturing an introducer sheath, comprising:
positioning an inner liner over a mandrel;
positioning a coil over the inner liner, the coil having a plurality of coil turns;
positioning a first polymeric sleeve over the coil, the first polymeric sleeve comprising a first striped extrusion arranged in a generally helical pattern along the first sleeve;

positioning a second polymeric sleeve over the first sleeve, the second polymeric sleeve comprising a second striped extrusion arranged in a generally helical pattern along the second sleeve, the second striped extrusion having a pitch generally opposite a pitch of the first striped extrusion, said second sleeve being aligned over said first sleeve such that upon a melting of said sleeves said second striped extrusion is superposed over said first striped extrusion and a generally braid-like configuration is defined thereby;

positioning a heat shrink material over an assembly comprising the mandrel, inner liner, coil, and first and second sleeves; and

heating the assembly to a temperature sufficient to cause said heat shrink material to shrink, said heating further causing said first and second sleeves to melt together to form an outer tubular layer and to define said generally braid-like configuration therein, wherein said heat shrink material causes said outer tubular layer to bond to said inner liner through said coil turns.

22. (New) The method of claim 21, further comprising the steps of removing said mandrel and heat shrink material.

23. (New) The method of claim 21, wherein the first striped extrusion is provided along an outer surface of the first polymeric sleeve, and the second striped extrusion is provided along an inner surface of the second polymeric sleeve.

24. (New) The method of claim 21, wherein said first striped extrusion comprises a plurality of extruded first stripes formed in said first polymeric sleeve,

each said first stripe spaced from an adjoining stripe and arranged in said generally helical pattern, and said second striped extrusion comprises a plurality of extruded second stripes formed in said second polymeric sleeve, each said second stripe spaced from an adjoining stripe and arranged in said generally helical pattern.

25. (New) The method of claim 21, wherein the first polymeric sleeve is co-extruded with the first striped extrusion, and the second polymeric sleeve is co-extruded with the second striped extrusion.

26. (New) The method of claim 21, wherein at least one of said polymeric sleeves comprises at least two sleeve segments, said segments comprising a proximal segment of a higher durometer and a distal segment of a lower durometer.

27. (New) The method of claim 21, wherein each of said polymeric sleeves comprises at least two sleeve segments, said segments comprising a proximal segment of a higher durometer and a distal segment of a lower durometer.

28. (New) The method of claim 21, wherein said sleeves are formed from a polyamide material.

29. (New) The method of claim 28, wherein at least one of said first and second striped extrusions is formed from a polyamide material having a higher durometer than a durometer of said sleeves.

30. (New) The method of claim 21, further including the step of forming at least one of said sleeves comprising said striped extrusion by a stripe extrusion process.